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evolved the tablets there are two points worth noticing. Firstly, the Islanders are distinctly clever with their hands and fond of representing forms. Setting aside the large images, the carving of the small wooden ones is very good, and the accuracy of the tablet designs is wonderful. Then they have real enjoyment in reciting categories of words; for example, in recounting folk-tales, opportunity was always gleefully taken of any mention of feasting to go through the whole of the food products of the island. In the same way, if a hero went from one locality to another, the name of every place *en route* would be rolled out without any further object than the mere pleasure of giving a string of names. This form of recitation appears to affect them æsthetically, and the mere continuation of sound to be a pleasure. Given, therefore, that it was desired to remember lists of words, whether categories of names or correct forms of prayer, the repetition would be a labour of love, and to draw figures as aids to recollection would be very natural.

Nevertheless, the signs themselves have no doubt a history, which as such, even apart from interpretation, may prove to be signposts in our search for the origin of this mysterious people.

The Bird Cult

Knowledge of the tablets was confined to a few, and formed a comparatively small element of life in the island; the whole of social existence revolved round the bird cult, and it was the last of the old order to pass away. The main object of the cult was to obtain the first egg of a certain migratory sea-bird, and the rites were connected with the western headland, Rano Kao. Little has yet been said of this volcano, but, from the scenic point of view, it is the most striking portion of the island. Its height is 1,300 feet, and it possesses a crater two-thirds of a mile across, at the bottom of which is a lake largely covered with weeds and plant-life. On the eastward, or landward face, the mountain, as already explained, slopes downward with a smooth and grassy incline, and the other three sides have been worn by the waves into cliffs over 1,000 feet in height. On the outermost side the sea has nearly forced its way into the crater itself; and the ocean is now divided from the lake at this point by only a narrow edge, along which it would be possible but